

Remarks

Further and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Initially, claims 17-19, which have been withdrawn from further consideration by the Examiner as being directed to a non-elected invention, have been cancelled. Applicants emphasize that this is being done without prejudice to Applicants' rights under 35 U.S.C. §121 to file a divisional application for the subject matter of these claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, as a result of which claim 2 has been cancelled.

Claim 8 has been cancelled in view of the amendments to claim 1.

Applicants take the position that the foregoing amendments should be entered even though they are presented after a final rejection. The amendment to claim 1 serves to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, which has already been considered by the Examiner. Accordingly, entry of the amendment to claim 1 will not require any further consideration and/or search. The other amendments serve only to cancel claims.

The patentability of the presently claimed invention over the disclosure of the reference relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting the claims will be apparent upon consideration of the following remarks.

Thus, the rejection of claims 1-3, 6-13 and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Velzel et al. (WO '471) is respectfully traversed.

As indicated above, claim 1 has been amended to indicate that the polar organic groups of the organic compound are selected from carboxylic acid, hydroxyl, amine and/or amide groups. This amendment has been made to define that the organic compound added to the molten urea is **not a salt**.

The Velzel et al. reference is concerned with a method for improving the quality of produced urea granules. According to this reference, a polyvinyl compound is added to urea (page 2, lines 30-38). The Examiner's reference to the same passage (page 2, line 34) cannot be interpreted as asserted by the Examiner - addition of a molten urea made up of polyvinyl compounds **along with** an organic molecule made up of polyvinyl compounds. The further reference to page 3, lines 29-31 is alleged to be that a further organic compound is added, but in

fact this disclosure is part of a definition of different preferences for the polyvinyl compound, not a separate compound in addition to the polyvinyl compound.

The Examiner's particular reference to Table 5 and the disclosure of an additive composition of 2000 ppm (by weight of urea) of 8 % concentrate polyvinyl alcohol in H₂O and Ca(OOCCH₃)₂, is an example of addition of a polyvinyl compound and a **salt** i.e. calcium acetate.

The present invention wherein a polyvinyl compound and, for example, an **acid** are added to the molten urea is distinctly different from the addition of a polyvinyl compound along with a **salt** as disclosed by Velzel et al. The chemical characteristics and properties of a salt of an acid are clearly different from the characteristics and properties of a "neutral" acid itself.

In the Response to Arguments section on page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that "(t)he claim seems to read as one organic group, claims explicitly should preclude the possibility of using only polyvinyl alcohol." However, claim 1 clearly states that "**both** a polyvinyl compound, **and** an organic compound having ..." are added to the molten urea. Giving the claims their broadest **reasonable** interpretation, this language clearly requires **two** compounds, not a single compound or "one organic group" referred to by the Examiner. The requirement for both compounds is clearly consistent with the disclosure in the specification, for example, the paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3, which includes the statement that the organic compounds (the polyvinyl compound and the organic compound (molecule)) can be added either separately to the molten urea or together with the aqueous solution of the polyvinyl compound. A reasonable interpretation of the claims does not include "using only polyvinyl alcohol" as referred to by the Examiner.

Thus, the Velzel et al. reference fails to disclose addition of **both** a polyvinyl compound and an organic compound having 1-10 carbon atoms and 1-10 polar organic groups which are selected from carboxylic acid, hydroxyl, amine and/or amide groups to a molten urea. Accordingly, the present claims are not anticipated by this reference.

The rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Velzel et al. with the Merriam-Webster entry on Polyol as evidentiary reference, is respectfully traversed.

Concerning claim 4, the Examiner has alleged that the use of pentaerythritol is obvious since Velzel et al. mention the use of polyols such as polyaspartic acid, poly(acrylic acid), poly(vinylalcohol). A polymer's chemical properties are obviously different from the properties

of a monomer. Velzel et al. disclose the use of, for example, polyaspartic acid, poly(acrylic acid), or poly(vinylalcohol) as a polyvinyl additive, whereas in the present invention the monomer pentaerythritol is used as an additional additive defined in claim 1 as "an organic compound having 1-10 carbon atoms and 1-10 polar organic groups".

For these reasons, Applicants take the position that the presently claimed invention is clearly patentable over the applied references.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that each of the grounds of rejection set forth by the Examiner has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik BIJPOST et al.

By:



Michael R. Davis

Registration No. 25,134

Attorney for Applicants

MRD/pth
Washington, D.C. 20005-1503
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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